

Kern County Commission On Aging

Stephanie Lynch, Chairperson

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Commission On Aging

"Making a difference in the lives of senior citizens."

**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

February 26, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

Lamont Senior Center

10300 San Diego Street, Lamont, CA 93241

and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The flag salute was completed, and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

*(*Chairperson, **Vice Chairperson, *** Parliamentarian, ****Secretary)*

Commission Members Present:

In Person – Susan Bodnar, Gloria Brown, Sonia Dhillon, Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, ***Kris Grasty, Anabel Hernandez, Genel Hodges, Norma Jackson, Julie Juarez-Ceja, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, *Stephanie Lynch ****Jeremy Oliver, Linda Oswald, Yolanda Prado, and **Judy Snyder

Virtually – None.

Excused Absences: Kevin Alvey and Devora Martinez

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Aaron Flucker

Roger Oswald

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Andres Villaseñor, Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person:

Maria Tapia, Stella Lopez, Ben Lopez, Alex Garcia, Fernando Rocha, and Catherine Vasquez

Virtually:

Joseph Anderson, Lourdes Garcia, and Hermandeep Dhaliwal

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no correspondence.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. Laura Juarez thanked the Commission for the sympathy card she received for the passing away of her brother.
2. Alex Garcia, Mayor of Wasco, thanked the Commission on Aging for their support and reaching out to Wasco. He apologized for not being able to attend the meeting in Wasco, but he is happy to be in attendance today to listen and learn about the good things the Commission does for seniors.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Commissioner Jackson shared there was an article in the Opinion section of the Bakersfield Californian detailing the chief plan for services overlooked in rural communities.
2. Parliamentarian Grasty reported during last month's meeting at the Wasco Senior Center, seniors commented they are wanting more activities at their center. She called the Director of Wasco Parks and Recreation regarding the senior's concerns and was told about their budgeting issues but they do have arts and crafts, birthday celebration once/month, they engage in walks in the park weekly, and AASD holds exercise and nutrition classes weekly. She wrote a letter to the Wasco seniors and informed them of the outcome of her meeting with the Director and informed them ADAKC will have a program to add and will contact the Director of Wasco Parks and Recreation. Parliamentarian Grasty also encouraged the seniors to attend the Parks and Recreation monthly meetings to address their concerns. Commissioner Juarez-Ceja added that she talked with the Executive Director about what their needs are. They will set up a site visit to see what space is available to use and to find out more about what their interest is, education, self-care, etc. so they can bring a program to them. This will be done within the next two weeks.
3. Commissioner Brown reminded all Commissioners when taking their Ethics training online to select the course for Local Officials (not State Officials). Chair Lynch reminded everyone they must be online for a minimum of two hours for their certificate to be recognized.

4. Commissioner Goodlow shared that she, Chair Lynch, and Commissioner Prado attended the Kern County Office of Emergency Services (OES) Community meeting on February 20th regarding their presentation on DeafLink, the new Accessible Hazard Alert System (AHAS). She shared information she learned about the program, which is part of ReadyKern, to provide emergency alerts in American Sign Language (ASL), Braille Reader Accessible, and in the Spanish language. The COA's Senior Center Advisory Committee will assist in disseminating this information to the seniors at the different senior centers in Kern County. They can sign up to receive emergency alerts in accessible formats by signing up for ReadyKern. Laura will provide brochures to Commissioner Goodlow to hand out to seniors. Commissioner Prado shared additional information about the alert system that can also assist with those who are Spanish speaking. She further shared that there are only two counties in California that have this particular alert system available, San Diego County and Kern County.
5. Chair Lynch shared that the California Association of Area Agencies (C4A) annual conference is coming up in May, and AASD will be sending two representatives from the Commission on Aging, Vice-Chair Snyder, and Commissioner Dhillon to the conference this year. Also representing TACC, Commissioner Gomez will be attending, and TACC will be covering the cost for her to attend the conference.
6. Chair Lynch thanked Vice-Chair Snyder for facilitating the meeting last month in Wasco, and thanked Commissioner Martinez for translating in Spanish during that meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for January 22, 2024, Regular Commission on Aging meeting was approved as amended to correct typos on pages 5 & 6.
Motion: Grasty; **Second:** Lemucchi; **Abstained:** Lynch, Prado, Bodnar, Brown, Goodlow, Gomez; **Opposed:** None. **Motion Carried.**
- **APPROVAL OF ETHICS TRAINING PROCEDURES:** The Ethics Training Procedures Training procedures were approved as amended to remove the word "not" from number 4.
Motion: Lemucchi; **Second:** Juarez-Ceja; **Abstained:** None; **Opposed:** None. **Motion Carried.**

LAMONT SENIOR CENTER – Andres Villaseñor

Andres Villaseñor thanked the Commission for coming to the Lamont Senior Center this month. This center provides meals to 4-7 seniors daily. Their dine in numbers are steadily increasing. The current activities/celebrations offered here are:

- Holiday decorating (Silent auctions during winter break is put on after hours)
- Birthday celebrations for congregate participants
- Presentations from Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) every 2nd Wednesday of the month
- Working on getting CDA approval for a new TV.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Public Health Nurse

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garica

Lourdes Garcia attended virtually and reported Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services are hoping the new psychiatric center on the east side of Bakersfield will be open soon. It will open beds for individuals who are in crisis. They continue to go out and provide outreach and education to the community to encourage people to seek help for services. There's a lot of lack of awareness in our community. Within their Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP), a lot of elderly people are having people knocking on their doors to sign up for different services, taking their personal information, and end up unknowingly being signed up for hospice. Jeremy shared that the department is also seeing a lot of that happening and asked that Lourdes please report those to Adult Protective Services (APS) and get the scammers business cards, if possible.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Maria Tapia

Maria Tapia reported they made significant progress on their backlog of renewals and should be caught up in 60-90 days. The asset limits will be eliminated on all programs. The State will make changes regarding the Medicare Savings Program. Commissioner Hernandez asked about the long wait on the line designated for vendors to call to help their clients enroll in Medi-Cal. Maria said there is a direct connection for vendors. Their EPA oversees new applications, and they continue to see an increase in applications.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez shared that they receive funding from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide the Home Access Grant. This program is for low-income, permanently disabled persons to install walkup ramps, walk-in showers, grab bars and other items to make it easier to get in and around their home. This is for homeowners and renters, with owner's permission, up to \$4,500. Their Home Improvement Loan is for homeowners only to make improvements to anything existing, like repair roof, paint, electric, etc. This is a no payment, no interest loan but a lien is placed on the mortgage and is repaid when the home is sold, or homeowners no longer occupy the property. If you know anyone interested in either program, please have them call the office at 661-862-5024.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhawali

Hermandeep Dhawali attended virtually and shared there are no new updates. Today, their office was hosting an Independent Livings Skills class from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. to go over budgeting or finance management. On February 28th, they will host a Peer Support Class at 2:30 p.m. to discuss tips and promote self-help values and social skills.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt attended virtually and shared their department did not receive the new elder grant. She will continue to assist elder clients, as well as other clients, and will continue attending the COA meetings. She will also be assisting with parole hearings. The DEAR newsletter will now be designed by their newly hired Public Information Officer. She, along with other contributors, will continue to write the articles for the newsletter, but it will have a completely new design. Anyone wanting presentations will now go through the Supervisor of the unit, Kayla Pinkston. She Supervises the Victim Services Unit, and the Family Justice Center. Both are housed at 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield. Kayla's number is 661-868-5955. Victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, or sexual assault should call the Family Justice Center at 661-868-5950. Victims of all other crimes will contact the Victim Services Unit at 661-868-5960.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The U.S. Administration for Community Living released their final Older Americans Act (OAA) regulations, updating regulatory policies for implementing OAA programs for the first time since 1988. The final OAA regulations are intended to align with the current statute, address issues that have emerged since the last update and clarify several requirements. The effective date is March 15, 2024, and states must comply by October 1, 2025.

STATE

We continue to watch and monitor the current state deficit. The Legislative Analyst Office estimates the deficit in 72-billion-dollar range while the Governor's office estimated 38 billion. Additionally, the department is watching closely for any additional legislative changes that may have impacts. This is the 2nd year of the 2-year legislative cycle and over 2,000 bills have been introduced to stay ahead of the cut off deadlines.

DEPARTMENT

We continue to promote our Digital Divide program and want to encourage referrals to our department to assist seniors with understanding and navigating their digital devices. The program can meet with individuals in their homes and can assist them with obtaining digital devices to improve their access to services.

The IHSS program continues to seek additional staff to keep up with the rising caseloads and referral growth and negotiations continue with the United Domestic Workers regarding IHSS provider wages.

APS program continues to see growth in referrals and planning for this year's elder abuse conference is underway with potential save the date of June 13th. The conservator program is likely to see some impact from the Care Court process being initiated in the coming months. SB 43, which is the expansion of the Grave Disability definition is being discussed to try to build needed infrastructure to make the bill viable regarding the substance abuse population.

The department hopes to have additional space in the next couple of months, which is much needed due to the ongoing growth of cases and staff.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; K. Grasty

Parliamentarian Grasty shared that now that the Ethics Training Procedures have been approved to be added as a Standing Rule, there is nothing new to report.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi; J. Snyder

Commissioner Lemucchi reported only one CSL proposal was picked up, which is the Special Needs proposal. This proposal hadn't been changed since the '80's and they have been trying to get that passed for some years now and hopeful that it will go through this year. Senior Rally is taking place virtually on Wednesday, May 8, 2024. There are multiple topics that will be discussed. Laura sent an email with instructions on how to register for this event.

Vice-Chair Snyder commented on the Master Plan for Aging. As we heard during last month's meeting, Supervisor Couch shared that the Kern County Board of Supervisors hadn't picked up the responsibility of moving that forward because there was no money coming down from the State. She was able to speak with Legislator staff and they understood why the government agencies hadn't moved forward with it for that reason.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Gomez; K. Grasty; L. Oswald

Commissioner Oswald reported the following:

- Recently Reappointed:
Ellen Linder was reappointed by North of the River Recreation and Park District. Her new term expires 01/10/2026.
- New Appointments:
None.
- Resignations:
None.

- Expired Terms:
Ellen Linder – term expired 01/10/2024. A letter of reappointment was sent to North of the River Recreation and Park District.
- Appointments Soon to Expire:
None.
- Vacancies:
 1. District 1 – for term expiring 06/17/2024 (replacing Debra Teofilo).
 2. Around the Clock Care, for term expiring 08/07/2025 (replacing Sandy Morris).
- New Applications Received:
None.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for February 2024.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – G. Hodges; S. Lynch; E. Linder

No report.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow; K. Grasty; J. Lemucchi; S. Lynch; L. Oswald; Y. Prado; J. Snyder

Chair Lynch reported the Exec. Committee met February 7, 2024, and the results of the meeting were already discussed or will be discussed in today's meeting. They also discussed meetings for the Master Plan for Aging ad hoc committee to plan for that.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – Vacant

Commissioner Hernandez reported there was no meeting for February. The next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2024, and she plans to attend.

LONG-TERM CARE – A. Hernandez; S. Bodnar; D. Duquette; D. Martinez; N. Jackson

Commissioner Hernandez reported they visited San Joaquin Nursing and Rehabilitation and walked through the steps of what Ombudsmen do and what they look for. Commissioner Bodnar reported they will meet again Friday, March 8th at 10:30 a.m. at the Windsor Post Acute Center in Arvin, CA.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – Y. Prado; D. Duquette; G. Hodges; S. Lynch; J. Snyder

Commissioner Prado reported they will be meeting in March to prepare for the 60+ Club health fair. They will check on supplies.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – K. Alvey; G. Brown; B. Goodlow; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow; A. Hernandez; G. Hodges

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center celebrated Black History Month at the center with dinner, dance, fashion shows, movies, and more. Lamont Senior Center does not have any elderly participants. One lady walks 1 mile to get here to pick up

her meal. Something needs to be done to bring seniors to the center. Commissioner Hernandez reported the East Niles Senior Center would like to get Wi-Fi connected out there. Jeremy reported he is working on getting them a screen and Wi-Fi access, which will hopefully increase attendance at the center. Commissioner Hernandez shared that they set up bereavement and caregiver support groups free for the community at East Niles Senior Center (English), Bakersfield Senior Center (English), Greenfield Senior Center (English), Shafter Senior Center (Spanish). There were 26 people in attendance at the first group class in Shafter. Vice-Chair Snyder commented seniors in Shafter and Lamont shared issues with transportation and personal safety. Seniors should feel safe coming to and getting back home safely from senior centers. Suggestions were made for transportation (Dial-A-Ride, Churches, etc.). Commissioner Lemucchi asked if the Digital Divide team will assist the seniors at the centers once the Wi-Fi is established. Jeremy responded yes, they will. Commissioner Prado commented that the Digital Divide team has been a tremendous help at the Richard Prado Senior center and would be helpful for someone to help them register for ReadyKern on their phone.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported she sent 5 cards in February and 1 in March.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – S. Gomez; S. Dhillon

Commissioner Gomez reported she attended the TACC meeting on February 22, 2024, and three presentations were given:

An introduction to the California Civil Rights Department –

- Investigates reports by the public of suspected civil rights violations.
- Promotes use by the public of the “CA vs Hate” hotline 833-866-4286 M-F 9 am. to 6 p.m., there's help in over 200 languages. This hotline is designed as a resource for the public who have experienced hate or suspected hate related incidents.

Draft Housing Recommendations –

- Expand community care resources.
- Implement/Increase Homeshare Programs – Homeowners make rented rooms available to adults of all ages to decrease the threat of being unhoused due to economic, etc. situations.
- Increase HUD grants to nonprofit organizations to increase facilities for older adults.

Modernizing TACC Program and Service Areas (PSA) Reports –

- Recommend that redundant sections of the report be updated annually and put on a spreadsheet that is accessible by TACC Representatives.
- Quarterly report would focus on what local Commissioners are doing to fulfill their missions to advocate for older adults in their areas.
- More discussion will be forthcoming at the next TACC meeting.

Update on Legislative Bills –

- AB 1993 increases the number of beds in Residential Facilities from 6-10.
- AB 2207 requires the Director of the CA Department of Aging or the Executive Director of the CA Commission on Aging sit on several boards, Commissions and committees

related to older adult issues which do not currently have such representation.

- AB 2620 revises Commission on Aging rules; reduces the number of Commissioners from 25-18.
- SB 1249 authorizes staff to look at AAA structures and identify core missions.

The next TACC meeting will be at the Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) annual conference on May 1, 2024, in San Jose, CA.

TRANSPORTATION – J. Juarez-Ceja; J. Lemucchi

Commissioner Lemucchi reported KernCog has not had a transportation meeting since December so they're waiting for the next meeting to be scheduled.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; E. Linder; L. Oswald

Commissioner Brown shared that there were no senior nutrition volunteers to recognize at the Lamont Senior Center, but they will continue to recognize volunteers as they visit each senior center throughout the year.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Parliamentarian Grasty shared that the Centenarian Recognition Program committee has been busy. They recognized three Centenarians in February. KGET Channel 17 Sunrise News continues to recognize Centenarians and is also recognizing them on their Facebook page. The next recognition will be in June 2024. Senator Grove's Office requested to partner with us on recognizing Centenarians and requested the names and addresses of the Centenarians we recognized in the past so they could send letters and wants the names going forward. A couple of Centenarians who received a letter from Senator Grove's Office were happy. The committee will continue to recognize Centenarians as they are received.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, March 6, 2024 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, March 25, 2024 (4th Monday due to Special Elections) 1:00 p.m. Kern River Valley Senior Center 6401 Lake Isabella Blvd., Lake Isabella, CA (COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 for the link to join)

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj